

1250 307  
1250 307

12 December 1953

TO: DIRECTOR FBI: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : The Suicide of Frank Olson

1. Attached are the complete files on this case which have been compiled jointly by the General Counsel and this office. I review of these files plus our conversations with Dr. Marston, the psychiatrist involved in the case, and Dr. W. Marshall Gottlieb, AD/CC, who received a full description of the case from Mr. Shirley Lovell, indicates certain factors that should be mentioned before this case is closed. It further should be noted that on 17 December, some 22 days after the event, Dr. Marston and Col. Price came to me unanticipated to report that Dr. Gottlieb had just learned that Col. Price knew of the experiment in advance and had given his approval to Dr. Gottlieb to conduct it on an unwitting basis.
2. Three conclusions can be drawn from the facts in this case:
  - a. The drug used has also been used fairly extensively in experiments and in psychiatric treatments conducted both for the benefit of the Agency and private practice.
  - b. The amount of drug used was only 1/7 of what has been used without ill effects.
  - c. Although Dr. Gottlieb knew all of the individuals who received the drug, he obviously was not aware of their medical records. Therefore, only one individual was excluded from the experiment because of a heart condition. Gottlieb was not aware that over a period of five years Olson had apparently had a suicidal tendency.
  - d. It is apparent that there is a strong possibility that the drug was a trigger mechanism precipitating Olson's suicide.
  - e. With the exception of the joining of concurrence of the Deputy Chief of CIA, no mechanism was available or utilized for getting approval for an experiment in which human lives could possibly be jeopardized.
  - f. Uncontrolled experiments such as those conducted by TPS could seriously affect the record and reputation of the Agency.
  - g. Although there is an intelligence committee on which CIA, FBI and Security sit, this committee was never advised or consulted about this experiment.
  - h. Using employees of another agency could seriously jeopardize our relationship with that and all other agencies should this become known.

~~SECRET~~ 307

2. Recommendations:

a. There should be immediately established a high-level intra-Agency board which should review all OSS experiments and give approval in advance to any in which human beings are involved, and to all others involving matters of policy or large amounts of money.

b. The Deputy Chief OSS should be reprimanded for his poor judgment shown in this instance and consideration should be given as to whether this individual should continue in his present position.

c. Chief OSS should be admonished to exercise tighter supervision and control over the use of this drug and should render periodic reports to D/W on its use and the result.

Lynn Kinstrell  
in "P" Directorate  
Inspector General

We concur generally in the above recommendations

MK  
780